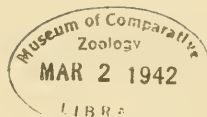


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NOTES ON SOME MEXICAN AND CALIFORNIAN  
BIRDS, WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF  
SIX UNDESCRIBED RACES

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Further intensive work with Sonora birds has made necessary some systematic adjustments, seven of which are considered in the present paper. To supplement material in the Dickey collection, specimens have been borrowed freely from the Bishop, Hachisuka, Peet, and Sheffler collections, from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Los Angeles Museum, Museum of Comparative Zoology, United States National Museum, Carnegie Museum, Field Museum and San Diego Society of Natural History. Their cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.

**Parabuteo unicinctus**

A few years ago (Birds of El Salvador, 1938, p. 119), I commented on certain color characters shown by Harris hawks from the northwestern part of the range of the species. Although measurements of all specimens examined had been recorded and the larger size of the northwestern birds had been casually observed, the degree of size difference was not appreciated until examination of still further material suggested a tabulation. It is now evident that there are adequate grounds for the recognition of a northwestern race on size alone, although average color differences provide an additional incentive. This race is named

**Parabuteo unicinctus superior** subsp. nov.

*Type*.—Female adult, no. 14750, Dickey collection; Laguna Dam, lower Colorado River, Imperial County, California, January 1, 1925; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

*Subspecific characters.*—Similar to *Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi* (Audubon) of the southeastern United States, eastern Mexico, and Central America, but size larger; coloration of adults more blackish (less brownish); immatures usually very much darker than the immatures of *harrisi*, and with the underparts often approaching the uniform condition of adults instead of being streaked on a buffy ground color.

*Range.*—Southeastern California, Lower California, southern Arizona, Sonora and Sinaloa.

*Remarks.*—54 specimens of *Parabuteo unicinctus* (35 adults and 19 immatures) have been examined and measured in American collections. Possibly an equal number have been casually seen in European collections, but no detailed notes were kept on these latter, save for the type of *Falco unicinctus* Temminck in the Paris Museum. As previously observed (*l.c.*), occasional *harrisi* are as dark as *superior*, but the average color difference is pronounced. A single specimen from Carlsbad, New Mexico, in the Biological Survey Collection, is just half way between the measurement averages; one from Zacatecas (City) in the Field Museum is closer to *superior*, but neither of these individuals is identified definitely at this time.

Specimens have been examined as follows—*superior*: California, 3; Lower California, 5; Arizona, 2; Sonora, 7; Sinaloa, 1; *harrisi*: southeastern Texas, 22; Vera Cruz, 1; Tamaulipas, 1; Nuevo Leon, 2; Coahuila, 4; El Salvador, 4; *subsp. indet.*: Zacatecas, 1; New Mexico, 1.

In this species the immatures closely correspond to adults in size, however, only adults are included in these measurements.

#### MEASUREMENTS

##### Extremes and Averages

|                                | <i>Wing</i>        | <i>Tail</i>        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 5 male <i>superior</i> .....   | 335-355<br>(342.5) | 230-250<br>(240.0) |
| 12 male <i>harrisi</i> .....   | 310-352<br>(330.8) | 207-230<br>(218.5) |
| 6 female <i>superior</i> ..... | 360-390<br>(375.0) | 243-265<br>(250.5) |
| 12 female <i>harrisi</i> ..... | 325-363<br>(347.8) | 210-245<br>(230.2) |

### *Cyrtonyx montezumae*

The Montezuma quail of southern Sonora has had an unsettled nomenclatural career, due in large part to misapprehension as to the characters of the nominate race of south-central Mexico. It has been called *montezumae*, *mearnsi*, or intermediate toward one or the other. I confess to having contributed materially to the uncertainty and can offer as excuse only the fact that not all of the material examined was studied at one time. Typical *montezumae* is not a common bird in collections, in fact I have examined only six (all males) in the Biological Survey on the present occasion and four in the British Museum in 1938, one of which is a female. The six males have been compared with 35 *mearnsi* from Arizona, northern Sonora, and northern Chihuahua, and with 14

from the western drainage of southern Sonora and southwestern Chihuahua. These latter present at least one distinctive character and I propose as a name for them:

***Cyrtonyx montezumae morio* subsp. nov.**

*Type*.—One-year-old male, no. 30894, Dickey collection; Guirocoba, extreme southeastern Sonora, Mexico, May 2, 1930; collected by J. T. Wright.

*Subspecific characters*.—Males very much like *Cyrtonyx montezumae montezumae* in the dark central head markings and nuchal crest, and in the relative darkness of the dorsal coloration. They differ from *montezumae* and from the paler *Cyrtonyx montezumae mearnsi* in the decidedly more pinkish or avellaneous (not yellowish or yellowish olive) tone of the dorsum, and in more grayish (less yellowish) olive ground color of the secondaries. Underparts similar to *mearnsi*, that is slightly paler plumbeous and chestnut, with spotting averaging larger in series. Females parallel the dorsal differences seen in males and are darker throughout than *mearnsi*. No comparison with female *montezumae* is possible due to absence of material.

*Range*.—Western drainage of southeastern Sonora, chiefly in Upper Sonoran and Transition zones (Rancho Santa Barbara; Hacienda de San Rafael; Mina Abundancia; Guirocoba; Las Chinchas; Yecora [Brit. Mus.]), southwestern Chihuahua (Bravo; Jesus Maria), and northeastern Sinaloa (Choix [Brit. Mus.]).

*Remarks*.—Both *montezumae* and *mearnsi* have a pronounced yellowish ochre tone dorsally and this tinges even the grayish olive of the inner wing feathers. Perhaps the chief characteristic of *morio* is the definitely pinkish dorsal tone and were it not for this its status would be that of an intermediate nearer to *montezumae*. Birds from the eastern drainage in Chihuahua by no means represent typical *mearnsi* and have even paler nuchal crests and wide linear streaking on the hindneck and back. W. De Witt Miller comments (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 22, 1906, pp. 162-3) on the pale crests of certain specimens from the interior drainage of northwestern Durango. As to the size of the white spots on the under parts of males, its importance has been considerably over-rated. *Mearnsi* and *morio*, in series, have distinctly larger spots and slightly paler plumbeous ground color as compared with *montezumae*, but these differences break down individually.

***Calocitta colliei***

A series of 46 specimens of Collie's magpie-jay from nearly all points in the range of the species has recently been assembled. In addition, Mr. James Greenway has kindly supplied certain color notes on 18 specimens in the Museum of Comparative Zoology. It is evident that this species is divisible into two races and, since the three names available all apply to the southern race, the northern one is herewith described as

***Calocitta colliei arguta* subsp. nov.**

*Type*.—Male adult, no. 30459, Dickey collection; Chinobampo, southern Sonora, Mexico, February 10, 1930; collected by J. T. Wright.

*Subspecific characters*.—Differs from *Calocitta colliei colliei* of southern Sinaloa, Nayarit and Jalisco in slightly longer and more slender bill and in darker gray sides and flanks. Males differ from males of *colliei* in decidedly shorter tail. Females differ from females of *colliei* in longer wing and tail. The sexes, therefore, are different in size in *colliei*, equal in size in *arguta*.

MEASUREMENTS  
Extremes and Averages

|                                | Wing             | Tail <sup>1</sup> | Exposed<br>Culmen   | Depth at<br>Nostril |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 10 male <i>arguta</i> .....    | 204-215<br>(212) | 223-237<br>(229)  | 37.5-41.0<br>(38.4) | 13.5-15.0<br>(14.2) |
| 6 female <i>arguta</i> .....   | 215-216<br>(215) | 220-235<br>(226)  | 37.0-39.7<br>(37.7) | 13.0-14.5<br>(14.6) |
| 12 male <i>colliei</i> .....   | 210-221<br>(213) | 236-260<br>(241)  | 34.8-39.5<br>(36.4) | 14.3-15.0<br>(14.6) |
| 18 female <i>colliei</i> ..... | 195-212<br>(207) | 210-227<br>(221)  | 33.0-37.0<br>(35.1) | 13.0-15.0<br>(14.0) |

*Range*.—Foothill and lower mountain region (chiefly Arid Tropical zone) of southeastern Sonora, southwestern Chihuahua, northern Sinaloa, and probably northwestern Durango.

*Remarks*.—The darker gray sides and flanks and the bluish gray tinge which frequently pervades the whole underparts are readily noticeable in most specimens. The extreme of this condition is seen in a specimen in the Sheffler collection in which the whole underparts are unevenly dark bluish gray. Analysis of the variable color of the throat has produced some interesting results. Irrespective of locality, the variation ranges from a pattern resembling *Calocitta formosa* to uniform, velvety black from chin to chest, and it is difficult to find two specimens exactly alike. However, the incidence of variables is greater in males than in females and far greater in *arguta* than in *colliei*. It is also greater in one-year-old birds than in adults, so much so that I suspect that full throat plumage is not attained until after the first post-nuptial molt at least. Not included in the following table are the *colliei-formosa* hybrids to be mentioned later.

|                                    | Uniform black | Variably mixed<br>with gray or blue |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Adult male <i>arguta</i>           | 9             | 15                                  |
| Adult female <i>arguta</i>         | 18            | 6                                   |
| One-year-old male <i>arguta</i>    | 1             | 4                                   |
| One-year-old female <i>arguta</i>  | 0             | 3                                   |
| Adult male <i>colliei</i>          | 9             | 5                                   |
| Adult female <i>colliei</i>        | 13            | 1                                   |
| One-year-old male <i>colliei</i>   | 0             | 1                                   |
| One-year-old female <i>colliei</i> | 1             | 2                                   |

Miller (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 21, 1905, pp. 358-9), divides 20 *colliei* from southern Sinaloa as 14 black and 6 variable, without, however, making

<sup>1</sup> Tail measurement from insertion of central pair of rectrices to tip of longest fourth (from outside) rectrix. Measurements of the longest (central) pair are unreliable because of rapid abrasion.

any age or sex distinctions. This approximates the general *colliei* average of about two and a half to one as given above.

The most recent monographer of the genus, Hellmayr, (Catl. Birds Amer., 1934, p. 11) treats *colliei* as conspecific with *formosa* on the grounds that the two are very closely related and the respective ranges complementary. It is my opinion that Ridgway (Birds of Nor. and Mid. Amer., Pt. 3, 1904, p. 294) was entirely correct in regarding the variation in throat pattern as normal in the species *colliei* and that structural characters set the two apart as distinct species. In the British Museum is a very instructive series of hybrids from Jalisco where the two species meet. In this series the characters of both species are variously present but, significantly, without apparent dilution or reduction. Some of these specimens were noted as follows.

|                    | Coloration         | Crest length | Tail length | Bill    |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| ♂ Volcan de Colima | formosa            | formosa      | colliei     | colliei |
| ♂ Colima           | formosa            | colliei      | colliei     | colliei |
| ♂ Beltran          | colliei            | colliei      | formosa     | colliei |
| ♀ Beltran          | formosa            | formosa      | colliei     | colliei |
| ♂ Zapotlan         | colliei            | colliei      | formosa     | colliei |
| ♀ Zapotlan         | mixed <sup>2</sup> | formosa      | formosa     | formosa |

### *Toxostoma bendirei*

Recent study of the series of Bendire's thrashers collected in Sonora over a period of years shows that two undescribed races are resident there. Interestingly enough, these represent respectively the pallid and dark reddish extremes of coloration attained by the species. These races I propose to name as follows:

#### *Toxostoma bendirei candidum* subsp. nov.

*Type*.—Breeding female adult, no. 30406, Dickey collection; 10 miles north of Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico, May 10, 1930; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Toxostoma bendirei bendirei* of southern Arizona, but coloration everywhere paler; dorsally more ashy brown, ventrally very much whiter, with flanks and under tail coverts pale grayish buff.

*Range*.—Resident in the Lower Sonoran deserts in the vicinity of Guaymas.

*Remarks*.—The extremely pallid coloration of the breeding thrashers collected about Guaymas was tentatively considered to be due to adventitious bleaching, until fresh plumaged material became available. Actually there seems to be relatively little difference in coloration between fresh and moderately worn specimens of this race. Eight specimens taken in January, May, and June, have been compared with 25 seasonably comparable *bendirei* from southern Arizona and northern Sonora, and with 11 of the race next to be described, besides numerous migrating and winter *bendirei* from Sonora in general.

#### *Toxostoma bendirei rubricatum* subsp. nov.

*Type*.—One-year-old male in breeding condition, no. 27847, Dickey collection; Tecoripa, southeastern Sonora, Mexico, March 1, 1929; collected by J. T. Wright.

<sup>2</sup> Black auriculars and black patches on sides of neck.

*Subspecific characters.*—Differs from *Toxostoma bendirei bendirei* of southern Arizona in darker and redder (less grayish brown) ventral coloration, particularly on flanks and under tail coverts, though with a rusty wash over the whole under surface; spotting more prominent and more generally distributed in series. Dorsal coloration slightly darker and more reddish brown, particularly on rump and upper tail coverts.

*Range.*—South-central and southeastern Sonora (Pesqueira; Tecoripa). More widely distributed in winter (Tiburón Island; San Carlos Bay; Tesia; Obregon; San Pedro Bay; Hermosillo). Not improbably resident in part or whole of the winter range, although definite records are as yet lacking.

*Remarks.*—After the annual molt there seems to be very little age difference in the general plumage coloration in this species. One-year-old birds retain the juvenal wing and tail feathers until the first post-nuptial molt. The latter are usually easily identified by their narrower and more pointed (less rounded) tips which, furthermore, often have little or no indication of the terminal light spots of maturity. In *rubricatum* the tips of the juvenal rectrices are pale, coffee brown and the tipping of the adult rectrices is sometimes tinged with the same color. In *bendirei* and *candidum* the terminal tail markings of juveniles appear as an ill-defined gray spot, or may be obsolete.

Pending a re-examination of certain material not now available, the breeding range of *rubricatum* cannot be more definitely defined. At the southern points in the range of the species, breeding begins in early March (with second nestings in early May) at a time when *bendirei* is present as a common migrant and winter visitant. Numerous specimens of *bendirei* have been examined from near Nogales south to the Mayo River valley and Alamos. Fourteen *rubricatum* have been examined from the localities cited in the range, taken in the months of January, February, March, November, and December.

### Agelaius phoeniceus

Ridgway's name of *Agelaius phoeniceus sonoriensis* has always been of uncertain application, though it has usually been assigned, with varying degrees of reluctance to the red-wing of the lower Colorado River valley. My own reservations were stated in a review of the California red-wings some years ago (Condor, 28, 1926, pp. 215-230), and later (Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., 8, 1936, p. 142) attention was called to the fact that the type was in agreement with the breeding birds of the Santa Cruz River valley in southeastern Arizona. Recently, Behle (Wilson Bull., 52, 1940, p. 238), in connection with work on Utah red-wings, has reopened the issue by suggesting that the type might be a winter vagrant of *Agelaius phoeniceus utahensis* Bishop, and in order to avoid a shifting of names has definitely assigned the name *sonoriensis* to the Colorado valley birds. In this latter course he had (*vide* Behle) the concurrence of Drs. Bishop, Oberholser and Wetmore. This allocation would be all very well providing the type of *sonoriensis* could not be identified with a breeding population; in fact it would be the only logical course to follow. But it cannot stand for the very good reason that it can, with confidence, be identified with the

breeding birds of the Santa Cruz and Altar valleys from the Sonora boundary north to the vicinity of Tucson. The status of the breeding red-wings of the San Pedro Valley, Arizona, in which is the site of the old Camp Grant, the type locality of *sonoriensis*, has no particular bearing on the point. The crux of the matter is that the name *sonoriensis* is out of bounds so far as the lower Colorado River red-wings are concerned. I had not, until recently, been disposed to go into the matter again but the naming of our Sonora series has made it necessary. For the race of the lower Colorado River valley I therefore propose the name of

*Agelaius phoeniceus thermophilus* subsp. nov.

*Type*.—Breeding female adult, no. J-607, Dickey collection; 3 miles north of Calexico, Imperial County, California, altitude 3 feet below sea level, May 6, 1921; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

*Subspecific characters*.—Most closely resembling *Agelaius phoeniceus sonoriensis* Ridgway of southeastern Arizona, but bill even longer and more

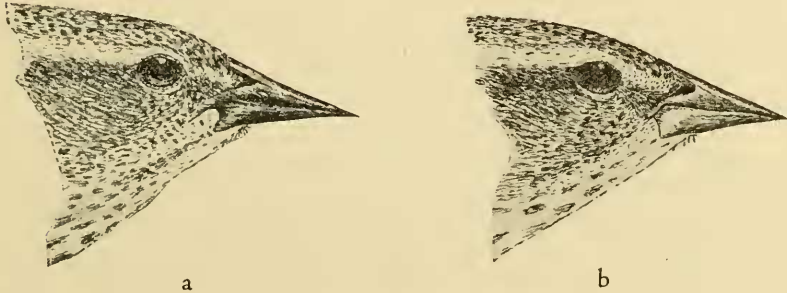


Fig. 1. Heads of adult females of *Agelaius phoeniceus*.  
 a. *thermophilus*, Type (J-607, Dickey Collection)  
 b. *sonoriensis*, Type (49771, U.S.N.M.)

(Drawings by the author)

slender, wing and tail averaging longer. Females decidedly browner and with all markings more diffused and less contrasting. Head and bill of type (Fig. 1a) copied from figure in *Condor*, 28, 1926, p. 229, fig. 76d, where selected as typical (not the extreme) of the Colorado valley population.

*Range*.—Lower Colorado River valley from extreme southeastern Clark County, Nevada, and adjacent portion of southwestern Arizona, south, including the Salton Sea region and the lower Gila River valley, to northwestern Sonora and northeastern Lower California. Resident and only rarely straggling beyond the established breeding range.

*Remarks*.—In series the females of *sonoriensis* have the dark and light pattern sharper and in more contrast than in *thermophilus* and there is a distinctly greater average amount of white edging on the interscapular region. The range of *thermophilus* extends up the lower Gila valley to about its juncture with the

Salt River. Specimens from Tempe and Phoenix are *thermophilus*, but not always typical; those from Tucson are *sonoriensis*. The ranges are separated along the Sonora boundary by some 200 miles of arid desert.

Almost without exception the comparative measurements of red-winged blackbirds are taken from slightly to moderately worn spring birds. In fresh plumage from two to four millimeters should be added to the wing and tail lengths.

MEASUREMENTS  
Extremes and Averages

|                              | <i>Wing</i>        | <i>Tail</i>     | <i>Culmen<br/>from base</i> | <i>Depth<br/>at base</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| ADULT FEMALES                |                    |                 |                             |                          |
| 26 <i>sonoriensis</i> .....  | 99-106<br>(102.2)  | 69-76<br>(71.5) | 18.8-20.5<br>(19.4)         | 9.5-11.3<br>(10.4)       |
| 18 <i>thermophilus</i> ..... | 101-112<br>(104.5) | 72-80<br>(76.7) | 19.3-21.4<br>(20.6)         | 9.5-10.7<br>(10.0)       |
| ADULT MALES                  |                    |                 |                             |                          |
| 11 <i>sonoriensis</i> .....  | 120-127<br>(123.0) | 86-94<br>(90.2) | 22.4-25.5<br>(23.7)         | 11.4-12.7<br>(12.3)      |
| 45 <i>thermophilus</i> ..... | 120-130<br>(125.4) | 86-97<br>(92.8) | 22.5-26.9<br>(24.8)         | 10.3-12.4<br>(11.3)      |

### *Tanagra elegantissima*

Only a short time before his death, J. H. Riley called to my attention the fact that *Tanagra elegantissima viscivora* van Rossem (Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool., Univ. Mich., 449, Oct. 9, 1941, p. 1) is preoccupied by *Euphonia flavifrons viscivora* Clark (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., 18, 1905, p. 19). As a tribute to a friend of many years' standing I designate *Tanagra elegantissima rileyi* as a substitute name for *Tanagra elegantissima viscivora* van Rossem, preoccupied.